



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

northeast Iowa and Henry County

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

rainbow darter

Etheostoma caeruleum

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Family:	Perciformes
Order:	Percidae

Features

The rainbow darter grows to an average length of 2 1/2 inches. The body is deeper than most darters and has dark bars on the sides. The bars are blue on the male and brown on the female. The typical rainbow darter has a brown back; a yellow, green, or red belly; and dorsal, tail, and anal fins that are red with a blue edge. The lateral line (sensory organ on the side of the fish) is incomplete. Like other darters, the dorsal fin is completely separated into two parts and a bone in the gill cover ends in a flat spine.

Natural History

The rainbow darter lives in creeks and rivers, selecting areas with a gravel or rock bottom. It lives near the bottom. It eats crustaceans, snails, and insects. It spawns from March through May. Eggs are buried in gravel. Large males defend a territory.

Habitats

interior rivers and streams